

The MICROMETER
November Supplement & Late Edition

31/10/2021

AUCKLAND SOCIETY OF MODEL ENGINEERS INCORPORATED

PO Box 14570, Panmure, Auckland 1072, NEW ZEALAND

Club House: Peterson Reserve, off Peterson Road, Mt Wellington, Auckland 1060 Telephone:
09 570 5286 Club Web Site: www.asme.org.nz

Featuring;

Breaking News from Canterbury

More Bits and Pieces from Greville

Items received since the publishing deadline, and we take this opportunity to digitally publish a great contribution from Grant which cannot be imported into our usual print software;

Hi all. At last night's committee meeting we took the difficult decision to officially postpone CANMOD 2022 for 12 months. This decision was not an easy one and has been taken as our view is that by Christmas it is more than likely that Canterbury will be in a level 3 or above lockdown due to COVID. We are not expected to be in the traffic light system until sometime next year ... this will mean that there is every likelihood that even if members attend Canterbury they will be unable to access our facilities.

The committee understands that this decision will affect a number of our fraternity throughout the country however we are unable to guarantee that we will be permitted to access our facilities during January and it was decided that we must err on the side of caution in this instance.

A further date will be advised once the organizing committee has had an opportunity to meet.

For those members who have registered and paid we are more than happy to arrange refunds or alternatively hold your registration and apply it to the revised convention date if you wish.

On behalf of the organizing committee for CANMOD 2022 I would like to apologize for this move but we simply cannot guarantee that we can meet the expectations of our members and visitors.

Best Regards

Alex Cowdell
CSMEE

THE LAST DAYS OF STEAM ON THE WEST COAST

With Paul Smith and Grant Anderson

Grant is a member of a Facebook Group that has a lot of ex NZR staff who often provide interesting comments from being on the job and occasionally give short stories of their NZR life. A recent poster, Paul Smith, has written about his days with steam on the West Coast and Grant asked him if he would be happy for it to be included in the Micrometer which he has approved. Paul wrote these from memory, via notes he made in 1980 (before the memory dimmed too much!). Grant has also added a couple of his photos taken at Elmer Lane at Easter 1966-69 (so in the same period Paul writes about) which show the workplace conditions

Firstly A428 on the turntable at the Roundhouse

Then the typewritten notes from Paul Smith

Inside the shed, A class P4-6-2 (RIP) and three 4-8-2's in service

A "tender view" of the roundhouse

Then we have Greville's "Bits and Pieces" from the October Zoom meeting, progress in fittings for his Beejax



copy
(1)

The Job, or Enjoying what I Did.

17/1/66.

Eimer Lane Locomotive Depot, Greymouth.

Monday morning, 07:45. A new experience, and a new way of life.

Since the age of 5, my ambition had always been to be a Train Driver. I was now on my way to realising that dream. I'll never forget the sounds and smells of that first day. Black Monsters at rest in ~~the~~ around the roundhouse, waiting for their turn of duty.

Greymouth at that time, had not 'updated' to Diesel power for freight haulage, and the only Diesel units were Vulcan Railcars and several shunting locos. Steam locos seemed to have a life force of their own, where as Diesels, I felt, were just a tractor on rails.

After being interviewed by the Locomotive Supervisor, and the Senior Shed Driver, of whom I was left in no doubt that his word was 'law', I then meet the Loco Trust Storeman. This 'gentleman', I soon discovered, had authority from an even higher source than the Shed Driver. Any items issued from the store, such as cotton waste, batteries, Fireman's shovels (known as a 'bsnjo'), or any other items needed on a daily basis, would have to be signed for in triplicate. The impression given that any items required came from his own personal stock, and it was only that one had caught him in a weak moment, that one was even acknowledged as being in 'his' store.

I was fitted out with a pair of Bib Overalls and Jacket, called 'blueies', given a pound of cotton waste, and told by the Shed Driver to 'follow me'. My career had begun.

As I had been interested in Trains since an early age, I thought I knew what made them 'tick'. Was I in for a surprise.

First job: unloading by hand, a wagon loaded with slabs of timber, used for lighting up steam locos. That job took up most of my first day.

Day 2. I was introduced to my First Steam Engine. As I had shown a lot of interest in steam at my job interview, this had been noted, and I was selected to undergo training for the Boiler Ticket exam. This is usually done after six months cleaning duties, so I must have made quite an impression on the 'powers that be'.

I was taught how to control the amount of water in the boiler, the correct way to bank the fire in the firebox so as not to waste coal when the engine is standing, and to avoid excessive smoke being discharged from the funnel. I seemed to be able to 'make smoke', rather than reduce it. After a bit of practice, I was deemed capable of undertaking the theory and practice exams for the Boiler Ticket.

The Shed Driver was the tormentor for this event, and did not give any favours. Upon passing this exam, a cleaner became a Loco Trainee, and could then be booked 'in charge' of a Boiler in Steam. As this entailed a high degree of responsibility, there was no room for any hit or miss attitude. One either passed or failed. I sat this exam on the first Friday of my service, and gained a 97% pass at the first attempt. A pass grade was 70%, so I was very pleased with my effort. I was later told that I had set a Depot Record in passing that exam in my first week.

On the job. 2.

The first Night shift week was an unforgettable experience! After the third shift, I felt like I was moving in a dream world. If this was what Railways was all about, I had been really misinformed. However, I decided that as I was here, I would give it a go. I later found out that this reaction to night shift was quite normal. A state of permanent jet lag?

I joined the permanent staff list after three months probation, and started to realise my childhood ambition of becoming an Engine Driver. About this time, I entered the world of Motor Vehicle Ownership with the purchase of a 1939 Austin Big 7. Total outlay-25Pounds(\$50.00), which, when my hourly rate was 3/6d (35c), took a little bit of saving for.

I started to spend as much time as I could, watching the Loco Fitters as they repaired the engines as I was fascinated by the intricacy of the valve gear, suspension, drawgear and all the other features of a steam locomotive.

On day shift, which was every third week, we were expected to assist the Fitter doing Boiler wash outs. A very important safety check was to ensure there was no steam pressure in the boiler by opening the whistle valve, and allowing any steam to escape. If this was not done, a very bad injury could occur to anyone removing a washout plug with steam pressure on the inside face of the plug! I was always very careful observing this simple, but vital safety check.

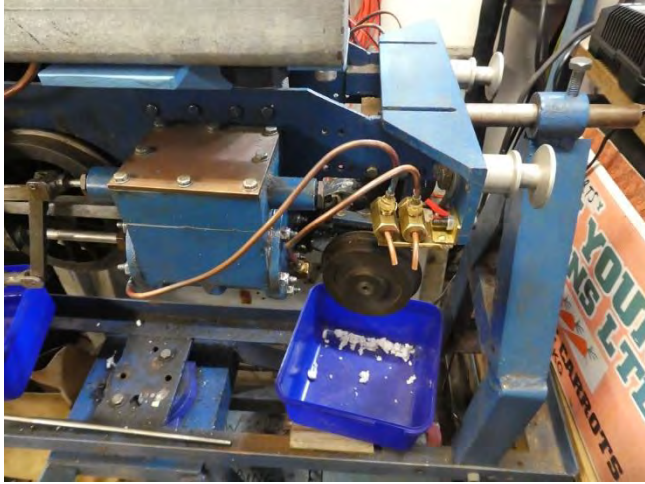
Other duties included cleaning ash from the smokebox after an engine had completed a run, coaling up, and ensuring that the water tanks were always full before an engine was stabled in the shed.

I spent 18 months as a Loco Trainee, before I was able to take the exam for Fireman. This entailed a 12 months correspondence course on topics concerning Signals, Rules & Regulations, and Locomotive Equipment Operation.

This exam, of the three topics, was taken on one day, usually a Thursday, followed by a practical test on demonstrating how to change a gauge glass, pack a leaking injector and fill an engine lubricator. The Signals exam was very tough, and I had to re-sit that portion.

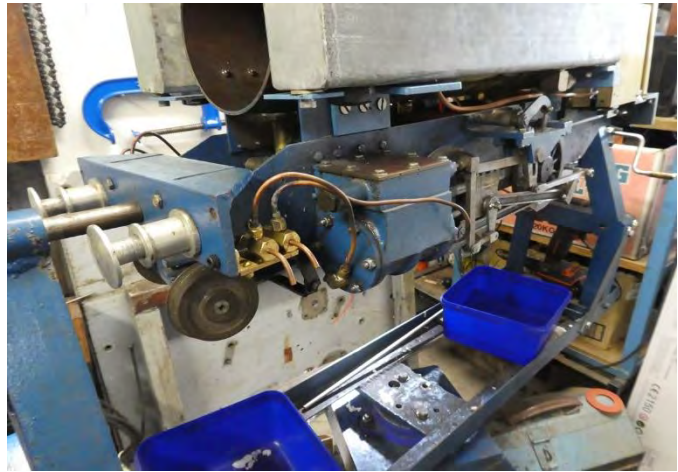






Right Hand Auto Drain Cocks

Left hand Auto Drain Cocks



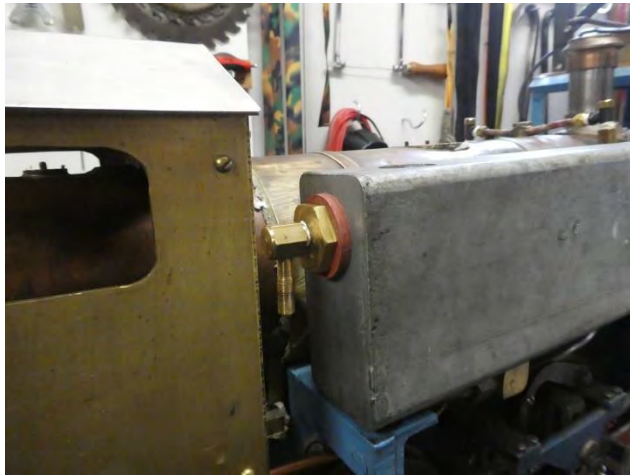
Safety Valves for my Bjax Loco





Blow-down Valve & piping to Quick Water fill inlet

Plus showing S.S plunger which is loose fit in the handle.



Right Water Tank By-pass inlet